



ATF News

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives
Columbus Field Division

CONTACT:

Patrick J. Berarducci
Supervisory Special Agent, PIO
614.496.4518

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 22, 2005

PHONY AGENT MEETS REAL THING

CLEVELAND, OHIO – A Willoughby, Ohio man who drew attention to himself when he allegedly passed himself off as an undercover ATF agent to an area gun dealer got to meet the real thing. Special Agents from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) of the U.S. Justice Department along with Eastlake, Ohio Police officers arrested Paul Smelko and searched his residence at 9109 Chillicothe Rd, Willoughby, last night.

Mr. Smelko was taken into custody for alleged violations of federal firearms laws at a gunshop where he was retrieving another weapon he had brought in for repairs, a Bushmaster semi-automatic rifle. Smelko was at Brass Tactics, 35475 Vine St, Eastlake, Ohio when ATF agents found and arrested him. At the time of his arrest he was also armed with a .45 caliber semi-automatic pistol, according to Larry Brock, ATF Resident Agent in Charge in Cleveland. Brock went on to say that Smelko offered no resistance and accompanied agents and officers who later searched his residence.

Brock said that Smelko is a previously convicted felon for whom it is illegal to possess any firearms. Four more handguns and a shotgun were recovered in the search of his home.

‘I would like to emphasize with the public that ATF agents, in addition to their badge, will have a two card credential set with their photo affixed that clearly identifies them and the position they hold,’ said Brock. You should always ask to see both.

Mr. Smelko is being taken before the U.S. Magistrate in Cleveland, today to face initial charges. The investigation is continuing.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Kelly Galvin is representing the government in this prosecution.

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